

PRESS RELEASE

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INSURANCE COMMISSION WARNS DRIVERS TO WATCH OUT FOR WEST VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

CHARLESTON, WV – West Virginia Insurance Commissioner, Jane L. Cline, announced today that the Insurance Commission has completed its annual study on auto related accidents involving deer and wildlife. The study estimates that over 19,000 deer and wildlife claims were paid by the top auto insurance carriers in West Virginia.

“West Virginia’s wildlife is a great resource for our state; however, for many West Virginia motorists it can be a daily threat to life and property” Cline said. The average cost of a claim directly attributable to wildlife is over \$1700 totaling approximately \$33 million. Not surprisingly, the number of auto related accidents involving deer and other wildlife increase during the months of October, November, and December, which coincides directly with both hunting and mating seasons.

The study is based on data supplied by insurers with 5% or more of the West Virginia market and includes only claims paid involving collision with wildlife. The data does not include damages caused by drivers avoiding wildlife and subsequently colliding with other objects. Although the number of claims is down from last year, they are comparable to previous years and represent a substantial impact on auto premiums paid by West Virginia drivers.

Commissioner Cline urges motorists to be aware of deer crossing signs, stay alert, and always wear a seatbelt. Also, deer tend to move in groups, so if you see one there are likely to be more. For more information visit the Insurance Commission web site at www.wvinsurance.gov